



State Sen. Edward L. Howard (R-10), second from left, joined concerned citizens last night at the hearing on a proposed quarry in Nockamixon Township. (Free Press photo by Sandy McClure)

Hearing on planned quarry attracts about 100 residents

By Sandy McClure
Free Press Staff

NOCKAMIXON TOWNSHIP — The president of a firm interested in a quarrying operation testified last night before about 100 Nockamixon Township residents that it would be a "simple matter" to quarry the former Revere Chemical Co. site off Route 611.

"It is located in a rural area where it will disturb very few," said Larry G. Stancill, president of the Maryland-based company proposing to quarry the former chemical reclamation site. "This is an excellent place to put a quarry."

But residents, along with township, state and federal officials, concerned over the environmental effects, disagree. And officials have called for an investigation into the web of events leading to the proposal to mine a site records show has contaminated soil.

"I don't know what gives him (Stancill) the right to think we have less to lose than an urban area," said Joan Bohlman, a Nockamixon resident, at a public session following the

hearing.

Harbucks Inc., of Joppa, Md., has filed a curative amendment with Nockamixon Township to establish a quarry zone for the 111-acre site.

The application, challenged by the township supervisors, has triggered a state requirement for a public hearing on the issue. Last night the company began presenting its case before the township supervisors. The hearing is expected to continue for several months.

"We supervisors think this is a health hazard, and we intend to prove it," said supervisor chairman Howard R. Shive at the public-comment session.

State Sen. Edward L. Howard (R-10) attended the hearing and responded to a citizen's comment that only the rich, who could afford legal help, could fight the proposal.

"You will be heard," he said. "I pledge the full support of the state in resolving all the issues...before any action is taken."

At a brief press conference outside of the hearing room in Palisades Junior-Senior High School, Sen.

Howard termed the site a colossal threat to the environment and said it was very unlikely a quarry would ever be put there.

"We are really beginning to experience leakage from the site," he said. "There is every indication there are dangerous chemicals in the soil."

The senator said he was also representing state Reps. Paul I. Clymer (R-145) and James C. Greenwood (R-143). He said the three had alerted Nicholas DeBenedictis, head of the state Department of Environmental Resources, about the quarry proposal.

He said either the state Attorney General's Office or DER would become involved.

"We will make sure it is not left only to lone citizens and their purses," he said.

And an aide to U.S. Rep. Peter H.

top attorney with DER to investigate possible recovery by the state of \$407,000 spent in 1971 for a cleanup at the site. The owners abandoned

Quarry hearing

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the site, leaving the state to foot a bill that was never repaid, officials say.

The state pumped and hauled 3.5 million gallons of acid waste from about a dozen lagoons, periodically leaking into nearby Rapp Creek and threatening downstream water supplies in the Delaware River, according to county officials. But records show remaining sludge was mixed with lime and buried.

Rep. Kostmayer's aide, John Seager, said research into newspaper files showed possible links between Harbucks Inc. and previous owners of the Revere site.

Mr. Stancill testified during the hearing that his company proposed to remove earth or "over-burden" from the site beginning at the place where two creeks meet and moving northward toward Route 611. He said weathered material would be scraped away before blasting of the rock began. He said the stone would then be crushed and stockpiled.

He said the highest "face" or wall would be 40 feet.

The "over-burden" would then be used to build berms parallel and adjacent to Route 611 and Quarry Road, he said.

Mr. Stancill testified that blasting would only disturb a 15-foot area behind where the blasting took place.

He also testified that DER, in a meeting in 1974-75 certified there was nothing left at the site that was not inert.

"I was informed that there was nothing toxic left there," he said.

The township attorney asked if Mr. Stancill would be willing to have the soil tested for contaminants before a decision was made on the

zoning change.

Mr. Stancill said he would not.

The owner said he had not yet applied for a mining permit, which will be required from DER. But Richard McBride, the Doylestown attorney representing Harbucks, said his client would do all the testing necessary for that permit.

"There is no sense muddying the record with the second step," Mr. McBride said.

Mr. Stancill also testified that soil sediment official had indicated there is a "very minor problem" of soil erosion at the site.

He could not name the official. However, the Bucks County Conservation District has reviewed the site and issued a notice of violation.

"I'm working with the people to solve this minor problem," Mr. Stancill said. But he added, "I never said I agreed there was a problem."

The township supervisors will make a decision on the curative zoning amendment when the hearing concludes. Testimony also centered on the township's challenge to Harbucks' ownership of the land and the standing of the curative amendment application in light of another application made to the township.

The supervisors' decision can be appealed to the Bucks County Court of Common Pleas. Appeals could continue to the state Supreme Court hearing moderator and Doylestown attorney Donald L. Toner, said.

Mr. Stancill, in response to comments made by Sen. Howard, said "I'm pleased to hear you say the process will be fair."

The hearing will continue at 7:30 p.m. March 13 in the Palisades High School cafeteria.

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